

General Assembly Meeting
Graduate and Professional Student Senate
04.13.23

Prior General Assembly Meeting

03.30.23

Meeting minutes not approved due to lack of quorum

In attendance

President | Ben Beiter: present

Vice President | Chloe Robertson: present

Senators: 38

Quorum reached: no

Motions

N/A

General Notes

- Elections
 - Director of Events
 - Isaac Pressgrove
 - He is the current events director for the Graduate Engineering Alliance. He is interested in becoming involved with student governance and has experience with events planning. He would like to see the GPSS expand their reach through events.
 - Director of Communications
 - Riley DeHORITY
 - Has attended GPSS meetings over the past three years as a guest and is interested in using the GPSS social media to connect with graduate students across the university. They have experience with graphic design.
 - Shathushan Sivashangaran
 - They are a PhD student in the mechanical engineering department. They are a current senator and have seen how the GPSS has affected the graduate population at large. They have experience with graphic design and website design. They want to use social media to promote outreach with our students.
- Executive Board Updates
 - Director of Programs
 - Cap and gown program is underway
 - The Summer TFP cycle opens up in two weeks. People often don't know about these funding programs so it's important for senators to let their constituents know!

- Details about the Summer TFP can be found on the [TFP website](#)
 - Applicants are only eligible to apply for money from the TFP once a fiscal year (the beginning of the fiscal year is June 30th)
 - All the money for a year's TFP has to be spent by June 30th
 - Vice President
 - As we get towards the end of the semester, please reach out to: chloerobertson@vt.edu to let her know if you'll be leaving the GPSS at the end of this academic year or reprising your role next year
 - If you are stepping down as a senator, please try to find a replacement from your department
 - Director of Events
 - The GPSS Spring Social is on April 29th at the Blacksburg Municipal Park
 - Dean Tack Talk on April 28th at noon in GLC Meeting Room C
 - Please [fill out this form](#) if you plan on attending
 - President
 - SVCC
 - Following up with Katie Polidoro and Martha Glass following their presentation in the GPSS General Meeting
 - Meeting with President Sands, Dean Surprenant, and Provost Clarke to discuss graduate contracts and funding
 - Working on the transition with the new Executive Board
- Ad Hoc Committees
 - Campus Development Committee
 - They had a tour of the new [data and decisions sciences building](#) (near The Inn)
 - There is no graduate student parking
 - There are 12 ADA spot for faculty and staff
 - The building is ADA accessible (pending the new elevators being put in)
 - Commission on Research
 - If graduate students or advisors are submitting manuscripts to a journal that require you to upload the data for the manuscript into a repository, the library can help you with that. They also give seminars regarding repositories and how to manage them
 - University Athletics Committee
 - Approved the new policy on student athlete attendance today.
 - The final version is pending
- Presentation by Christa Miller from the Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office
 - Presentation on language changes happening in SSD documents and AIM
 - How to apply for an accommodation letter with the SSD Office
 - Students need to fill out a form with the SSD office to request services. Once the form is filled out
 - Applicants don't need supporting documents right away
 - When the form is filled out the applicant will be invited to a 'welcome meeting' where they will talk to a member of the SSD office. The office will

use that meeting to discuss what barriers might be put in the way of the student's progress and/or time here at VT. They will then think of specific accommodations to address those barriers.

- Once the accommodations are decided, the SSD office will create the letter detailing the accommodations necessary for the student.
 - The letter is going through an overhaul right now
- Students can go back to the SSD accommodations to revise the accommodations (and accompanying letter) at any point
- Graduate Student Support
 - Graduate students can get support from the SSD Office from anything related to their graduate program
 - Coursework and graduation requirements
 - Anything a graduate student receives money for goes through the ADA and Accessibility Services instead
- A taskforce was made (2019) to see how the SSD Office could better support graduate students and in this time the Covid-19 pandemic hit
- In Fall 2023, the shift was made to the [AIM system](#) so students will now interact with the SSD Office through AIM
 - This means the application process is completely digital now and [students can find out how to accomplish this online](#)
 - The [digital application process](#) is designed to streamline the application process
 - Previously, VT didn't have a Health Care Provider Disability Verification Form, but they now have [one](#). This makes it easy for health providers to fill out a form that is then given to the SSD Office
- Accommodations language changes
 - The changes were made to improve clarity, readability, and consistency
 - This is to benefit not only the student who needs the accommodations, but also the instructors. This means instructors can better support their students and students have consistent language they can use to explain the support they need
- Accommodation letters will now go directly to a course instructor in banner
- AIM has a faculty portal where faculty can see and export a list on students in their class who have SSD accommodations
- Senator questions
 - Will the faculty side have a master list of accommodations? Like not organized by students, but just every accommodation requested in that class over all. For example, will faculty be able to see an overview of all the accommodations they might need for all their students so they can make necessary changes for all students?
 - The exportable list will have a list of student names and a checkbox system to see which students need which accommodation

- Should instructors include the link to the SSD Office instructions in their syllabi?
 - While they don't need to, it would be a good idea for instructors to either include, or point students to, the link for instructions on how to apply for accommodations
- Tuition and Costs for Graduate Students
 - The graduate school has been working on cost transparency for graduate students
 - They now have a [webpage where students can get transparency regarding costs](#)

Old Business

N/A

New Business

- Student Activity Fee Allocation Board (SAFAB) Policy
 - Reviews how fees go towards paying for UCSOs
 - Defines SAFAB for the first time
 - Increases organisation flexibility
 - Removing the telephone as it is now defunct
 - This policy affects undergraduates more than us, but it is important for everyone
- Graduate Student Budget Board (GSBB) Policy
 - Guidance on how to use funding (for example on contracted speakers, performers, and guests)
 - Provides guidance on how to write contracts
 - Senator questions
 - There was some ambiguity in the previous policy regarding what it meant to get money to go to a conference because it benefits the campus (for example, a group of students being funded to go to a local conference which would put them in contact with a larger conference at the national level which benefits the students and also the department they come from). Is this new policy going to make it clearer how students can get money and whether they qualify?
 - Answer: The GSBB don't want to close the door on students getting funding for conferences by being too explicit in the policy. There are instances where there's some ambiguity over how groups can get funded through the GSBB. It might make sense to shift some of the competition conference funding over to the TFP in future years but we would have to check if this would be viable with how these two programs are funded by the graduate school

Closing Remarks

- BT Transit
 - Asking for people who use the transit service to [fill out a survey](#) by April 28th

- Respondents will be entered into a raffle to win a \$50 visa gift card
- GPSS GA Position
 - The interview process will open at the end of the semester but, in the meantime, there is an [application process](#) and a [general overview](#) of the role.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chloe Robertson', written in a cursive style.

Chloe Robertson